



April 8, 2004

Grand jury returns firearms indictments

A federal grand jury in Providence has returned indictments charging five defendants, in unrelated cases, with being felons in possession of firearms. One of the defendants is also charged with drug trafficking.

The Office of the United States Attorney, Monty J. Monteiro, Resident Agent in Charge of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, and Colonel Dean Esserman, Chief of the Providence Police Department, jointly announced the indictments, which the grand jury returned yesterday in U.S. District Court, Providence.

Jeremy Hall, 27, of 260 Adelaide Avenue, Providence, is charged with being in possession of a .40 caliber semi-automatic pistol on January 27.

Jerrell Page, 21, of 8 Nebraska Street, Providence, is charged with being in possession of a .357 caliber revolver on January 2.

William M. Thompson, 20, of 131 Calla Street, Providence, is charged with being in possession of a nine millimeter semi automatic rifle on February 26.

Alberto Rodriguez, 36, of 27 Hawkins Street, Providence, is charged with being in possession of a .40 caliber semi-automatic pistol on November 28.

Edgar Medina, 19, of 786 River Avenue, Providence, is charged with being in possession of a nine millimeter semi-automatic pistol on February 7. Medina is also charged

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with possessing with intent to distribute in excess of 50 grams of crack cocaine, possessing with intent to distribute heroin, and possessing with intent to distribute marijuana, all on February 7.

An indictment is merely an allegation and a defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty. The statutory maximum penalty for being a felon in possession of a firearm is ten years in federal prison and a \$250,000 fine. The statutory maximum penalty for the drug-trafficking offenses charged against Medina are: possessing with intent to distribute in excess of 50 grams of crack cocaine – life imprisonment and a \$4,000,000 fine; possessing with intent to distribute heroin – 20 years in prison and a \$1,000,000 fine; possessing with intent to distribute marijuana – five years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine. Federal sentencing is determined on the basis of guidelines that rely on such factors as the specific nature of an offense and a defendant's criminal background, if any.

All five defendants are detained and will be brought into U.S. District Court for arraignment.

The **Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives** and **Providence Police** investigated these cases. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Zechariah Chafee, Terrence P. Donnelly, Richard W. Rose, and Stephen G. Dambruch are prosecuting them. They are being prosecuted federally as part of a **Project Safe Neighborhoods** initiative in which firearms cases are jointly reviewed by the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office and the U.S. Attorney's Office to determine where best to prosecute them. Project Safe Neighborhoods is a Department of Justice initiative against gun crimes.

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